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45. A method of forming a lesion in a left atrium of a patient, comprising the steps of:

introducing a circumferential ablation device including an expandable member and a circumferential ablation element into the left atrium;

expanding the expandable member;

engaging a circumferential region of tissue at a location where a pulmonary vein extends from the left atrium with the circumferential ablation device; and

ablating the circumferential region of tissue with the circumferential ablation element.

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46. A method as claimed in claim ~~45~~⁴⁴, wherein the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device including a collapsible/expandable hoop and a circumferential ablation element.

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47. A method as claimed in claim ~~46~~⁴⁴, wherein the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device including a collapsible/expandable hoop and a continuous conductive region on the hoop.

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48. A method as claimed in claim ~~47~~⁴⁴, wherein the step of introducing a circumferential ablation device comprises introducing a circumferential ablation device including a collapsible/expandable hoop and a plurality of spaced conductive regions on the hoop.

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49. A method as claimed in claim ~~48~~⁴⁴, wherein the step of engaging a circumferential region of tissue comprises encircling the pulmonary vein with the expandable member.

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50. A method as claimed in claim ~~49~~⁴⁴, wherein the step of ablating the circumferential region of tissue comprises transmitting energy into the tissue.

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~~51~~. A method for treating a left atrial arrhythmia in a left atrium of a patient, comprising:

introducing a circumferential ablation member into the left atrium, said circumferential ablation member comprising an expandable member and an ablation element;

positioning the circumferential ablation member along a location where a pulmonary vein extends from the left atrium;

expanding the expandable member until the expandable member engages a circumferential region of tissue along the location; and

ablating the circumferential region of tissue with the circumferential ablation element while the expandable member is expanded and engaged to the circumferential region of tissue.

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~~52~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, wherein the left atrial arrhythmia originates at least in part from an arrhythmogenic origin located along the pulmonary vein, and further comprising ablating the circumferential region of tissue at the location which is between the arrhythmogenic origin and the left atrium, such that the left atrium is electrically isolated from the arrhythmogenic origin.

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~~53~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, further comprising:
forming a circumferential lesion by ablating the circumferential region of tissue such that the circumferential lesion has a lesion width and also a lesion circumference, wherein the lesion width is less than two-thirds the lesion circumference.

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~~54~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, further comprising ablating the circumferential region of tissue at the location which includes the pulmonary vein ostium.

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~~55~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, further comprising engaging the expandable member with the circumferential region of tissue by:

expanding the expandable member from a radially collapsed position to a radially expanded position while the expandable member is positioned within the left atrium; and

advancing the expandable member when in the radially expanded position toward the pulmonary vein until the expandable member engages the pulmonary vein wall.

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~~56~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, further comprising:
allowing antegrade blood flow to perfuse from the pulmonary vein and into the left atrium through the location when engaging the expandable member with the circumferential region of tissue and also while ablating the circumferential region of tissue with the circumferential ablation element.

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~~57~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, further comprising:
ablating an elongate region of tissue located along a left atrial wall of the left atrium with a linear lesion ablation element provided along a linear lesion ablation member.

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~~58~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, wherein the expandable member comprises an outer surface and the ablation element is located at least in part along the outer surface, and further comprising:

contacting at least a portion of the circumferential region of tissue with the ablation element when the expandable member is expanded;

ablating the circumferential region of tissue with the ablation element while the ablation element is in contact with at least the portion of the circumferential region of tissue.

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~~59~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, wherein the ablation element comprises a cryogenic ablation element, and further comprising:

ablating the circumferential region of tissue at least in part by activating the cryogenic ablation element to cool the circumferential region of tissue.

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~~60~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, wherein the ablation element comprises a fluid delivery ablation element, and further comprising:

ablating the circumferential region of tissue at least in part by exposing an ablative fluid from the fluid delivery element to the circumferential region of tissue.

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~~61~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, wherein the ablation element comprises a microwave ablation element, and further comprising:

ablating the circumferential region of tissue at least in part by inductively coupling the microwave ablation element with the circumferential region of tissue.

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~~62~~. The method of claim ⁵⁰~~51~~, wherein the ablation element comprises an optical ablation element, and further comprising:

ablating the circumferential region of tissue at least in part by optically coupling the optical ablation element with the circumferential region of tissue.